

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 /073 W

-----121658Z 038225 /44

R 120800Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9760

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 836

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MZ, BC

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: THE DOMINANT VOICE AT THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE RULING BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS THAT OF PRESIDENT SERETSE KHAMA GIVING REASONS FOR THE RECENT DECISION TO CREATE A DEFENSE FORCE AND TO ABANDON BOTSWANA'S UNIQUE STATUS AS A COUNTRY DEVOTING ALL OF ITS RESOURCES TO DEVELOPMENT. THE PRESIDENT ALSO STRESSED BOTSWANA'S DEDICATION TO THE IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY. HE REAFFIRMED BOTSWANA'S OBLIGATION TO GIVE REFUGE TO VICTIMS OF POLITICAL OPPRESSION AND ANNOUNCED CREATION OF A PARTY YOUTH WING. A DELEGATION FROM FRELIMO PARTICIPATED, THUS RECIPROCATING ITS INVITATION TO BDP TO ATTEND FRELIMO CONGRESS OF LAST FEBRUARY. END SUMMARY.

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2. PRESIDENT KHAMA'S KEYNOTE SPEECH AT SIXTEENTH ANNUAL BDP CONGRESS APRIL 9-11 SOUNDED THE THEMES OF DEFENSE AND SECURITY THAT GUIDED DELIBERATIONS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED DELEGATES. DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS INVITED TO OPENING SESSION AT WHICH PRESIDENT KHAMA SET THE TONE AND SUBJECT MATTER FOR DELIBERATIONS THAT FOLLOWED. THE OTHER MAIN SPEAKER AT OPENING SESSION WAS FRELIMO REPRESENTATIVE TANQUINI

(PHONETIC), VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. OFFICIALS EXPLAINED THAT BDP TRADITION IS TO INVITE ONE FRATERNAL PARTY TO EACH ANNUAL CONFERENCE; THIS YEAR IT WAS FRELIMO'S TURN (ITS FIRST VISIT) AND RECIPROCATED INVITATION TO BDP TO FRELIMO CONFERENCE OF LAST FEBRUARY.

3. DEFENSE AND SECURITY. PRESIDENT KHAMA ESTABLISHED THEME IN OPENING PARAGRAPHS OF HIS SPEECH (COPIES POUCHED TO AF/S) WHEN HE DESCRIBED PRESENT ERA AS ONE OF "GREAT ANXIETIES AND PERSISTENT FEARS" AND EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE SITUATION "IS GETTING WORSE DAY BY DAY AS (BOTSWANA) IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING A VICTIM OF UNPROVOKED ACTS OF TERROR AND AGGRESSION PERPETRATED BY THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT THERE NECESSARILY HAS TO BE WAR IN THIS REGION BEFORE THERE CAN BE PEACE". ANY POTENTIAL AMBIGUITIES OF THIS STATEMENT WERE ELIMINATED LATER WHEN PRESIDENT KHAMA STATED BOTSWANA WAS VICTIM OF THESE ATTACKS BECAUSE OF ITS SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPLES INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. "HENCE, WE CANNOT BUT SUPPORT FULLY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO TAKE UP ARMS TO FIGHT FOR THIS INALIENABLE RIGHT." HE REFERRED TO "CIRCUMSTANCES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA", WHICH "FORCED" BOTSWANA TO "ABANDON OUR LONG-HELD BELIEF THAT OUR WEAKNESS IS OUR STRENGTH AND OUR MODERATION AND PEACEFUL NATURE THE IMPREGNABLE SAFEGUARD FOR OUR SURVIVAL IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD". IN WORDS TINGED WITH REGRET, HE NOTED BOTSWANA WAS THUS CONFRONTING THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. HE NOTED AUSTERITY WOULD BE REQUIRED IN VIEW OF THE NEED "TO FIND THE FUNDS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THIS (DEFENSE) FORCE AND THIS CALLS FOR A CLEAR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON ALL OF US WHO HAVE BECOME USED TO CLAMORING FOR MORE PAY AND MORE PRIVILEGES".

4. DEMOCRACY. ALLIED WITH RATIONALE FOR CREATING THE DEFENSE FORCE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF BOTSWANA'S COMMITMENT TO IDEALS WHICH HAVE MADE BOTSWANA A "TRUE MODEL OF DEMOCRACY". THESE IDEALS INCLUDE NATIONAL UNITY AND EQUALITY, SELF-RELIANCE, DISCIPLINE, LOYALTY AND SERVICE. HE STRESSED ACTION BETWEEN LEADERS AND PEOPLE AS "THE ESSENCE OF A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY".

5. REFUGEES. KHAMA REITERATED BOTSWANA'S OBLIGATION "TO GIVE REFUGE TO VICTIMS OF POLITICAL OPPRESSION". HE SAID "WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED...THAT BOTSWANA IS A POOR COUNTRY AND LIKELY TO BECOME POORER AS THE DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN THIS AREA COMPELS US TO DIVERT DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FROM VITAL PROJECTS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE INTO DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SECURITY CAPABILITIES AND TO THE UPKEEP OF THE INTERMINABLE INFLUX OF REFUGEES".

KHAMA NOTED THAT "THE MORE REFUGEES WE RECEIVE, THE MORE WE WILL BECOME VULNERABLE TO OUTSIDE AGRESSION AS THREAT OF ABDUCTION PERSISTS".

6. PRESIDENT KHAMA ANNOUNCED CREATION OF A YOUTH WING OF THE BDP, NOTING THAT NO PARTY CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT SUPPORT OF YOUTH AND NO NATION CAN DEVELOP WITHOUT "THE DYNAMISM AND SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF AITS YOUTH". HE WARNED, HOWEVER, AGAINST THE "TRADITION" OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF "GETTING OVEREXCITED DURING CAMPAIGNS. WE WILL NOT WANT TO FIND OURSELVES FACED WITH A YOUTH WING WHICH GOES AROUND TERRORIZING NON-BDP SUPPORTERS AT GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS".

7. FRELIMO. PRESENCE OF FRELIMO DELEGATION AND BDP DESIRE TO BE HOSPITABLE RESULTED IN HASTILY IMPROVISED ATTEMPTS TO TEACH CONFERENCE DELEGATES HOW TO SHOUT SUCH SLOGANS (IN PORTUGUESE) AS "THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES", "VICTORY OVER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPERIALISM" AND "LONG LIVE FRELIMO". FRELIMO REP MADE RELATIVELY RESTRAINED SPEECH POINTING TO SUCH "ACHIEVEMENTS" AS "NATIONALIZATION OF SCHOOLS AND BUILDINGS", ASSUMPTION BY THE STATE OF CONTROL OF "PRIVATE SECTOR", CREATION OF COMMUNAL VILLAGES, AND ENDING EXPLOITATION. HE CONCLUDED WITH THREE GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING GOM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, MUTUAL RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND INTEGRITY, AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN BRIEF REPLY, MINERAL RESOURCES AND WATER AFFAIRS MINISTER CHIEPE THANKED FRELIMO DELEGATION AND NOTED BOTSWANA AND MOZAMBIQUE COULD LEARN "SOME THINGS FROM EACH OTHER". ONE BDP STALWART AND GOB MINISTER TOLD ME THAT BOTSWANA HAD NOT

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

INTENTION OF FOLLOWING MOZAMBIQUE'S LEAD, PARTICULARLY NOT IN CREATING A ONE-PARTY STATE WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS THE ROOT OF TOTALITARIANISM. BDP MINISTER ADDED THAT ONE-PARTY STATES WERE SO COMMON IN AFRICA THAT A RUMOR HAD CIRCULATED STATING THAT BDP CONSTITUTION WOULD BE CHANGED TO MAKE BOTSWANA A ONE-PARTY STATE. HE STATED BOTSWANA WOULD NEVER TAKE THIS STEP, THAT YOUTH HAS TO BE ENLISTED IN THE STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL FREEDOM.

8. COMMENT: PRESIDENT KHAMA'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT BOTSWANA HAS ABANDONED THAT SMALL GROUP OF NATIONS WITHOUT A DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT IS A NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENT. ALTHOUGH THE REASONS ARE UNDERSTOOD, THE CREATION OF A DEFENSE FORCE IS WIDELY MOURNED HERE BECAUSE IT MEANS THE DIVERSION OF RESOURCES FROM BADLY NEEDED DEVELOPMENT. THE REASONS, AND PRESIDENT KHAMA'S STATEMENT OF THEM, SHOULD BE REQUIRED READING FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN WHY A PEACEFUL UNARMED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEMOCRATIC NATION IS OBLIGED TO GO THE WAY OF MODERN NATIONS AND ARM ITSELF, HOWEVER SYMBOLICALLY, TO PROTECT ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

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